

EPA’s Superfund Redevelopment Initiative (SRI) is helping communities reclaim and reuse contaminated lands for a wide range of purposes, including community spaces such as dog parks and animal shelters where people can help care for animals and play with their pets. Across the country, communities, local governments, animal health and rescue organizations, and humane societies are working together to reclaim properties in underused and often underserved areas to provide public health and recreation benefits for people and animals.

The types of animal facilities built on these sites range from single-use play areas to complexes that provide veterinary care, conduct animal health outreach and offer training classes. Some are stand-alone facilities, while others connect with nearby land uses such as sports fields, community centers, trails and parking areas. This fact sheet highlights two of these remarkable facilities in action.



Barking Good Fun: People and Pets at Play

Chemical Insecticide Corp. Superfund Site (Edison Township, New Jersey)

Whitman Avenue Dog Park began as an idea in the community; two Girl Scouts led the way, advocating for the facility at local council meetings. EPA had completed the cleanup of this former industrial facility in 2005. In 2008, after Edison Township purchased the 5.7-acre property using funds from the Township’s Open Space Trust Fund and a state Green Acres Grant, a community committee came together to plan and develop the park. Several localities – Edison Township, Metuchen Township and Middlesex County – coordinated with EPA to make sure dog park plans would be compatible with the site’s remedy.

The dog park officially opened to the public in June 2016. It features walking paths, shaded play areas, benches and water fountains as well as parking. Dog playground equipment, a children’s playground, and a butterfly garden were added in 2017. The localities share park maintenance duties, monitoring its use, mowing, pruning and removing trash.

“Our new dog park is a prime example of how neighboring towns can work cooperatively and share resources to provide new and useful services to their residents,” Edison Mayor Thomas Lankey said. “This park also represents an environmental success, reclaiming a former industrial site that has been made safe for public use and enjoyment.”

Addressing Community Needs, Benefiting People and Animals

Davis Timber Company Superfund Site (Lamar County, Mississippi)

At this former wood-treating facility near Hattiesburg, site owners, community organizations and local governments worked together with EPA and state agencies on a coordinated approach that linked cleanup and redevelopment, with a protective remedy and land revitalization as overarching goals.

In 2011, as EPA prepared to clean up the site, the community was looking to address a pressing need for additional animal care resources. Existing facilities had limited funding and limited space and faced growing demands. “The idea was to create a facility focused on caring for animals more broadly, bringing the community together around education and training as well as adoption,” said veterinarian Dr. Brenda Sumrall.

The new organization – the Hub City Humane Society – went from idea to reality in less than a year. Donations of all kinds, from money and supplies to volunteer services and time, steadily poured in. Sponsorships from local organizations and contracts with nearby localities to care for animal control animals helped to sustain the shelter’s budget. Partnerships with the Humane Society of the United States and other groups led to a 100 percent adoption rate.

In 2014, the organization was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the PetSafe ‘Bark for your Park’ program for a new dog park. The facility – named the “Fields of Barktopia” – opened in February 2016. It includes separate areas for dogs of different sizes, as well as water stations and gazebos. The next phase of the park’s buildout will focus on adding an agility section, landscaping, shade sails, benches and other amenities. About 150 people and their pets visit the facility each week.

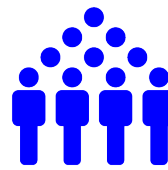
Today, the site is also home to several other uses – Breland Community Center, a parking area and restored habitat for pollinators. Trail connections link the area to the Longleaf Trace, a 41-mile recreation trail. The Hub City Humane Society continues to collaborate with rescue and animal welfare organizations locally and nationally, and provides continued training and education for management and staff. Looking forward, its plans for the future include a horse shelter, programs for children to help take care of the horses and other shelter animals, and dog training programs.

Hub City Humane Society: *By the Numbers (2017)*



Animals taken care of annually:

2013 = 1,701
2014 = 2,523
2015 = 2,981
2016 = 3,279



Employees:

2 full-time,
14 part-time



Total volunteer hours annually:

1,500



Followers on Facebook:

15,525



of dog park visitors each month:

600

**Information provided by the Hub City Humane Society*

Animals in Need

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, about 6.5 million animals enter animal shelters nationwide each year. About 1.5 million are euthanized.





A local student provided the name for the Humane Society's Fields of Barktopia.



The community donated several Humane Society buildings.



The Bigger Picture

The cleanup and reuse of these former industrial facilities illustrate how local leadership and collaboration with EPA can lead to the successful reuse of Superfund sites for public uses such as dog parks and animal shelters. Outcomes at these sites protect public health and the environment, enable care for thousands of animals, and strengthen community well-being by encouraging healthy and active lifestyles. Nationwide, more than 100 other sites are in reuse for recreational purposes. Through an array of tools, partnerships and activities, SRI continues to provide communities with new opportunities to grow and prosper.

For More Information

To learn more about Superfund Redevelopment, please contact Melissa Friedland, Superfund Program Manager for Redevelopment, at friedland.melissa@epa.gov; or Frank Avisato, Superfund Redevelopment Initiative Project Manager, at avisato.frank@epa.gov; or visit SRI's website at www.epa.gov/superfund-redevelopment-initiative.